

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method for forming a pattern of lesions in a tissue region at or near a sphincter in the anal canal comprising ~~the steps of~~

providing a support structure having a transparent side wall sized and configured for advancement into the anal canal and carrying an array of electrodes that are coupled to a source of energy capable of heating tissue when transmitted by the electrodes, including a mechanism to selectively retract the electrodes within the support structure and to selectively advance the electrodes in a path through the transparent sidewall outside the support structure to penetrate a targeted tissue region and form, when the energy is transmitted, a pattern of lesions,

inserting the support structure into the anal cavity with the electrodes retracted within the support structure,

positioning the support structure so that the targeted tissue region extends in its entirety along the transparent sidewall,

visualizing the dentate line and the alignment of the electrodes with respect to the dentate line by a direct line of visual sight from an end portion of the support structure and through the transparent sidewall of the support structure, the direct line of visual sight also including through the transparent sidewall a simultaneous visualization of the entire targeted tissue region,

moving the support structure, while visualizing through the transparent sidewall, to aligning align the electrodes in a desired location with respect to the dentate line,

advancing the electrodes to extend through the transparent sidewall of the support structure to penetrate tissue at or near a sphincter, and

applying energy through the electrodes to create a pattern of lesions in the sphincter.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A method according to claim 1 further comprising ~~for forming a composite lesion in a tissue region at or near a sphincter in the anal canal comprising the steps of~~

~~providing a support structure sized and configured for advancement into the anal canal and carrying an array of electrodes that are coupled to a source of energy capable of heating tissue when transmitted by the electrodes, including a mechanism to selectively retract the electrodes~~

~~within the support structure and to selectively advance the electrodes in a path outside the support structure to penetrate a tissue region and form, when the energy is transmitted, a pattern of lesions,~~
~~_____ inserting the support structure into the anal cavity with the electrodes retracted within the support structure,~~
~~_____ visualizing the dentate line and the alignment of the electrodes with respect to the dentate line through the support structure,~~
~~_____ aligning the electrodes in a desired location with respect to the dentate line,~~
~~_____ advancing the electrodes to extend through the transparent sidewall of the support structure to penetrate tissue at or near a sphincter,~~
~~_____ applying energy through the electrodes to create a first pattern of lesions in the sphincter,~~

retracting the electrodes, and

rotationally shifting the position the support structure in the targeted tissue region, so that advancement the electrodes a second time forms, when the energy is transmitted, a second pattern of lesions rotationally shifted from the first pattern of lesions, together comprising ~~the a~~ composite lesion.

Claim 3 (Cancelled)

Claim 4 (Cancelled).

Claim 5 (Original): A method as in claim 1 or 2

wherein the energy applied is radiofrequency energy.

Claim 6 (Original): A method as in claim 1 or 2

wherein the electrodes are aligned to penetrate internal sphincter muscle.

Claim 7 (Original): A method as in claim 1 or 2

wherein the electrodes are aligned to penetrate external sphincter muscle.